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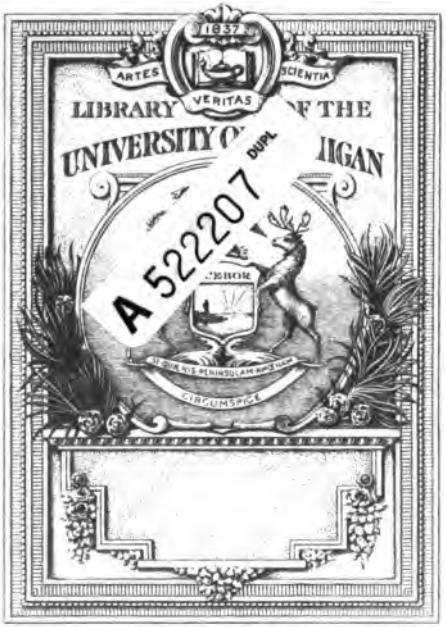

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NIGHT.

A PREFATORY LETTER TO Mrs. MONTAGU.

BY A FRIEND.

DEAR MADAM, Briſtol, October 20, 1784.

THERE is nothing more inconvenient than a high reputation, as it ſubjects the poſſeſſor to continual applications, which thoſe of a contrary character entirely eſcape. The delight which you are known to feel in protecting real genius, and in cheriſhing depreſſed virtue, expoſes you to the preſent intruſion, from which

 a cold

a cold heart, and an illiberal ſpirit, would have effectually ſecured you.

On my return from Sandleford, a copy of verſes was ſhewn me, ſaid to be written by a poor illiterate woman in this neighbourhood, who ſells milk from door to door. The ſtory did not engage my faith, but the verſes excited my attention; for, though incorrect, they breathed the genuine ſpirit of Poetry, and were rendered ſtill more intereſting, by a certain natural and ſtrong expreſſion of miſery, which ſeemed to fill the heart and mind of the Author. On making diligent enquiry into her hiſtory and character, I found that ſhe had been born and bred in her preſent humble ſtation, and had never received the leaſt education, except that her brother had taught her to write. Her mother, who was alſo a milk-woman, appears to have had ſenſe and piety, and to have given an early tincture of religion to this poor woman's mind. She is about eight-and-twenty, was married very young, to a man who is ſaid to be honeſt and ſober, but of a turn of mind very different from her own. Repeated loſſes, and a numerous

numerous family, for they had ſix children in ſeven years, reduced them very low, and the rigours of the laſt ſevere winter ſunk them to the extremity of diſtreſs. For your ſake, dear Madam, and for my own, I wiſh I could entirely paſs over this part of her ſtory; but ſome of her moſt affecting verſes would be unintelligible without it. Her aged mother, her ſix little infants, and herſelf (expecting every hour to lie in), were actually on the point of periſhing, and had given up every hope of human aſſiſtance, when the Gentleman, ſo gratefully mentioned in her Poem to STELLA, providentially heard of their diſtreſs, which I am afraid ſhe had too carefully concealed, and haſtened to their relief. The poor woman and her children were preſerved; but—(imagine, dear Madam, a ſcene which will not bear a detail) for the unhappy mother, all aſſiſtance came too late; ſhe had the joy to ſee it arrive, but it was a joy ſhe was no longer able to bear, and it was more fatal to her than famine had been. You will find our Poeteſs frequently alluding to this terrible circumſtance, which has left a ſettled impreſſion of ſorrow on her mind.

When I went to ſee her, I obſerved a perfect ſimplicity in her manners, without the leaſt affectation or pretenſion of any kind: ſhe neither attempted to raiſe my compaſſion by her diſtreſs, nor my admiration by her parts. But, on a more familiar acquaintance, I have had reaſon to be ſurpriſed at the juſtneſs of her taſte, the faculty I leaſt expected to find in her. In truth, her remarks on the books ſhe has read are ſo accurate, and ſo conſonant to the opinions of the beſt critics, that, from that very circumſtance, they would appear trite and common-place, in any one who had been in habits of ſociety; for, without having ever converſed with any body above her own level, ſhe ſeems to poſſeſs the general principles of ſound taſte and juſt thinking.

I was curious to know what poetry ſhe had read. With the Night Thoughts, and Paradiſe Loſt, I found her well acquainted; but ſhe was aſtoniſhed to learn that Young and Milton had written any thing elſe. Of Pope, ſhe had only ſeen the Eloiſa; and Dryden, Spenſer, Thomſon, and Prior, were quite unknown to her, even

even by name. She has read a few of Shakeſpeare's Plays, and ſpeaks of a tranſlation of the Georgics, which ſhe has ſomewhere ſeen, with the warmeſt poetic rapture.

But though it has been denied to her to drink at the *pure well-head* of Pagan Poeſy, yet, from the true fountain of divine Inſpiration, her mind ſeems to have been wonderfully nouriſhed and enriched. The ſtudy of the ſacred Scriptures has enlarged her imagination, and ennobled her language, to a degree only credible to thoſe, who, receiving them as the voice of everlaſting Truth, are at the pains to appreciate the various and exquiſite beauties of compoſition which they exhibit. For there is, as I have heard you remark, in the Prophets, in Job, and in the Pſalms, a character of thought, and a ſtyle of expreſſion, between Elóquence and Poetry, by which a great mind, diſpoſed to either, may be ſo elevated and warmed, as, with little other aſſiſtance, to become a Poet or an Orator.

By the next poſt, I will ſend you ſóme of her wild wood-notes. You will find her, like all

unlettered Poets, abounding in imagery, metaphor, and perſonification; her faults, in this reſpect, being rather thoſe of ſuperfluity than of want. If her epithets are now and then bold and vehement, they are ſtriking and original; and I ſhould be ſorry to ſee the wild vigour of her ruſtic muſe poliſhed into elegance, or laboured into correctneſs. Her ear is perfect; there is ſometimes great felicity in the ſtructure of her blank verſe, and ſhe often varies the pauſe with a happineſs which looks like ſkill. She abounds in falſe concords, and inaccuracies of various kinds; the groſſeſt of which have been corrected. You will find her often diffuſe from redundancy, and oftener obſcure from brevity; but you will ſeldom find in her thoſe inexpiable poetic ſins, the falſe thought, the puerile conceit, the diſtorted image, and the incongruous metaphor, the common reſources of bad Poets, and the not uncommon blemiſhes of good ones.

If this commendation be thought exaggerated, qualify it, dear Madam, with the reflection that it belongs to one who writes under every complicated

plicated diſadvantage; who is deſtitute of all the elegancies of literature, the accommodations of leiſure, and, I will not barely ſay the conveniencies, but the neceſſaries of life: to one who does not know a ſingle rule of Grammar, and who has never even *ſeen* a Dictionary.

Chill Penury repreſs'd her noble rage,
And froze the genial current of her ſoul.

Though I have a high reverence for art, ſtudy, and inſtitution, and for all the mighty names and maſter ſpirits who have given laws to Taſte, yet I am not ſorry, now and then, to convince the ſupercilious Critic, whoſe maſs of knowledge is not warmed by a ſingle particle of native fire, that genius is antecedent to rules, and independent on criticiſm; for who, but his own divine and incomprehenſible genius, pointed out to Shakeſpeare, while he was holding horſes at the play-houſe door, every varied poſition of the human mind, every ſhade of diſcrimination in the human character? all the diſtinct affections, and all the complicated feelings of the heart of man? who taught him to give to the dead letter of narrative the living ſpirit of action;

action; to combine the moſt philoſophic turn of thinking with the warmeſt energies of Paſſion, and to embelliſh both with all the graces of Imagination, and all the enthuſiaſm of Poetry? to make every deſcription a picture, and every ſentiment an axiom? to know how every being which *did* exiſt, would ſpeak and act in every ſuppoſed circumſtance of ſituation; and how every being, which did *not* exiſt but in imagination, *muſt* ſpeak and act, if ever he were to be called into real exiſtence.

But to return to the ſubject of my Letter: When I expreſſed to her my ſurpriſe at two or three claſſical alluſions in one of her Poems, and inquired how ſhe came by them, ſhe ſaid ſhe had taken them from little ordinary prints which hung in a ſhop-window. This hint may, perhaps, help to account for the manner in which a late untutored, and unhappy, but very ſublime genius of this town *, caught ſome of thoſe ideas which diffuſe through his writings a certain air of learning, the reality of which he did not poſſeſs. A great mind at once ſeizes

* Chatterton.

and

and appropriates to itſelf whatever is new and ſtriking; and I am perſuaded that a truly poetic ſpirit has often the art of appearing to be deeply informed on ſubjects of which he only knows the general principle; by ſkilfully ſeizing the maſter feature, he is thought artfully to reject the detail, with which, in fact, he is unacquainted; and obtains that credit for his knowledge which is better due to his judgment.

I have the ſatisfaction to tell you, dear Madam, that our poor Enthuſiaſt is active and induſtrious in no common degree. The Muſes have not cheated her into an opinion that the retailing a few fine maxims of virtue, may exempt her from the moſt exact probity in her conduct. I have had ſome unequivocal proofs that her morality has not evaporated in ſentiment, but is, I verily believe, fixed in a ſettled principle. Without this, with all her ingenuity, as ſhe would not have obtained my friendſhip, ſo I ſhould not have had the courage to ſolicit for her your protection.

I already anticipate your generous concurrence in a little project I have in view for her relief.

relief. It is not intended to place her in ſuch a ſtate of independence as might ſeduce her to devote her time to the idleneſs of Poetry. I hope ſhe is convinced that the making of verſes is not the great buſineſs of human life; and that, as a wife and a mother, ſhe has duties to fill, the ſmalleſt of which is of more value than the fineſt verſes ſhe can write: but as it has pleaſed God to give her theſe talents, may they not be made an inſtrument to mend her ſituation, if we publiſh a ſmall volume of her Poems by ſubſcription? The liberality of my friends leaves me no room to doubt of ſucceſs.—Preſſing as her diſtreſſes are, if I did not think her heart was rightly turned, I ſhould be afraid of propoſing ſuch a meaſure, leſt it ſhould unſettle the ſobriety of her mind, and, by exciting her vanity, indiſpoſe her for the laborious employments of her humble condition; but it would be cruel to imagine that we cannot mend her fortune without impairing her virtue.

For my own part, I do not feel myſelf actuated by the idle vanity of a *diſcoverer*; for I confeſs, that the ambition of bringing to light a genius

genius buried in obſcurity, operates much leſs powerfully on my mind, than the wiſh to reſcue a meritorious woman from miſery, for it is not fame, but bread, which I am anxious to ſecure to her.

I ſhould aſk your pardon for this dull and tedious Letter, if I were not aſſured that you are always ready to ſacrifice your moſt elegant purſuits to the humbleſt claims of humanity; and that the ſweetneſs of renown has not leſſened your ſenſibility for the pleaſures of benevolence, nor deſtroyed your reliſh for that moſt touching and irreſiſtible eloquence, *the bleſſing of him who was ready to periſh.*

I am,

Dear MADAM,

Your much obliged,

And very faithful

Humble ſervant,

HANNAH MORE.

NIGHT.

To STELLA.

AT this lone hour, when Nature ſilent lies,
And CYNTHIA, ſolemn, aids the riſing ſcene,
Whilſt Hydra-headed Care one moment ſleeps,
And, liſtleſs, drops his galling chain to earth;
O! let ſwift Fancy plume her ruffled wing,
And ſeek the ſpot where ſacred raptures riſe;
Where thy mild form, relax'd in guiltleſs ſleep,
Forgets to think, to feel; may dreams of bliſs
Lull thy ſoft ſenſe, nor paint the ſcene of woe
I lately told; think not my ſpirit near,
Light airy ſhade, that would elude thine eye,

And ſhrink to nothing, conſcious of thy worth,
Yet here I dare, in Fancy's boundleſs walk,
Invoke thy Muſe, and hail thy ſong ſublime.

MELPOMENE! thou ſadly ſighing maid!
Great Queen of Sorrows, in majeſtic weed,
Whoſe gayeſt airs are ſolemn ſounds of woe;
Thou who awak'ſt fair STELLA's ſoothing lay,
Soon as Aurora gilds the bluſhing Eaſt,
O lend thy aid, while thy ſoft votary ſleeps,
And bid *me* boldly ſwell the artleſs line,
Lend me *her* pen, and guide my ruſtic hand,
To draw ſoft pity from the Tragic Tale,
Where goading Miſery drives her ploughſhare deep;
Teach me to paint the tremors of the ſoul
In Sorrow's deepeſt tints; aſſiſt the ſigh,
And, with its breathings, ſwell the throbbing heart.
The tear-clad eye, when ſofter paſſions ruſh
T' aſſault the ſoul beſieged by others' woe,

That

That eye where pity tips the pointed beam
With treble ſoftneſs—Oh! that eye is hers.

The hoary hermit, chill'd by frigid rules,
Who totters on the hair-breadth verge of fate,
And dies an age that he may live for ever,
Would ſudden ſtop, forgetful of the paſt,
Nor heed the future, liſt'ning to her ſong;
Her ſong, leaſt part, her ſoaring ſpirit ſhares
An early Heaven, anticipates her bliſs,
And quaffs nectareous draughts of joy ſublime;
Beyond yon ſtarry firmament ſhe roves,
And baſks in ſuns that never warm'd the earth;
Newtonian ſyſtems lag her rapid flight,
She pierces thro' his planetary worlds,
And, eager, graſps creations yet to be.

Ye buſy world! what are your cobweb toils,
Your Siſyphéan labours? Infant piles,

To raiſe a bubble, which in air diſſolves;
You toil an age to graſp the ſhining duſt,
Death trips your heels, you throw it to the wind:
" Ah! let your irons on their anvils cool,"
And liſt a while to STELLA's moral ſtrain;
She'll teach thy eye in mental maze to creep,
Timid and trembling, to explore the paſt;
Alarm'd by her, the monitor within
Shall aid thy ſearch, and bring thyſelf to view.
Examine deep; that ſecret arbitrator
Shall give thee ſelf-applauſe or deep remorſe.
Heav'n guard thee from that Harpy, never fill'd,
Still, ſtill inſatiate as the bird of Jove,
That deeply gores the breaſt for meals eternal,
Nor knows a glut from ever-growing food.
Still ſtruggle, reſtleſs; ſink to depths profound,
Nor ever own a thought beneath immortal;
As ſuch Jehovah views thee in the duſt,
As ſuch he'll waft thee to the plains of Heaven.

What's

What's Death? Like infants ſick of ſenſeleſs toys,
We ſink to reſt—awake to love and joy;
To love and joy awakes the raviſh'd ſoul,
Who lived to virtue, and who own'd a God.
But, ah! too daring theme—STELLA, aſſiſt!
My humble ſpirit waits your ſocial hand,
Whoſe friendly beckon points to realms of bliſs;
See, STELLA ſoars, nor heeds my plaintive note,
Nor will the Muſe aſſiſt my ſluggard flight;
With rapture, ſee, ſhe claſps her fav'rite maid,
And bids me fix where Science never dawn'd;
Hard, hard command! and yet I will obey;
Unaided, unaſſiſted, will deplore
That learning, Heaven's beſt gift, is loſt to me.
Cheerleſs and penſive o'er the wilds of life,
Like the poor beetle creep my hours away;
The journey clos'd, I ſhoot the gulf unknown,
To find a home, perhaps—a long loſt mother.
How does fond thought hang on her much lov'd name,

And tear each fibre of my burſting heart,
Ah! dear ſupporter of my infant mind,
Whoſe nobler precept bade my ſoul aſpire
To more than tinſel joy; the filial tear
Shall drop for thee, when pleaſure loudeſt calls.
The dark ſky lour'd, and the ſtorms of life
Roſe high with wildeſt roar; no voice was heard,
But Horror's diſmal train affrights our ſouls.
For ſee, from the dark caverns of the deep,
Their grieſly forms ariſe; the crown of Death
Shone horribly reſplendent. See! they ſeize
A trembling, fainting, unreſiſting form,
Which hourly met their graſp: Ah! ſpare her yet.
See from the ſhore V—— waſts his friendly hand;
He's born to bleſs, and we may yet be happy:
Quick let me claſp her to my panting heart,
And bear her ſwiftly o'er the beating wave.
In vain, in vain; ſome greater power unnerves
My feeble arm; inexorable Death,

Why

Why wilt thou tear her from me? Oh! ſhe dies,
Tho' V——'s dear name had lent a feeble glow
To her pale cheek,—ſhe owns him, and expires.
Tremendous ſtroke! this is thy paſtime, Fate:
If ſhrinking atoms thus thy vengeance feel,
What the grand ſtroke of final diſſolution?

Believe me, gentle friend, I could complain;
But what avails the deep repining ſigh!
How inexpreſſive of the heart-felt pang!
When Heav'n afflicts, none ſhould oppoſe the plea,
For who ſhall hold the arm that thus has wreck'd me?

Say, bright Inſtructreſs! ſoother of the ſoul,
Whoſe flowing numbers, ſtrong as Jesse's harp,
Deſpair ne'er heard, but loathing left the ſoul;
Dire fiend! whom ſounds of joy could ne'er allure;
O ſay, for ſtrong-eyed Faith has borne you far
Beyond the gloomy chambers of the grave;

Speak loudly to my late corrected ſoul,
That ſure reward awaits the blameleſs mind;
Elſe will I give the ſtrenuous ſtruggle o'er,
Deny a V—— as delegate of Heaven,
Throw up your Angel mind, as painted ſhade,
Or notion ſtrong from early precept caught,
Rove thro' the maze of all-alluring ſenſe,
And this ſide JORDAN every hope ſhall fix:
Mere ravings all—theſe crude ideas die,
As Faith to CALVARY's mount directs my view;
Nor will I loſe, thus humbled as I am,
My dear-bought claim to Immortality.

Excuſe me, STELLA! lo, I guideleſs ſtray,
No friendly hand aſſiſts my wilder'd thought;
Uncouth, unciviliz'd, and rudely rough,
Unpoliſh'd, as the form thrown by by Heaven,
Not worth completion, or the Artiſt's hand,
To add a ſomething more. Such is the mind

Which

Which thou may'ſt yet illumine; 'tis a taſk
For Angels thus to raiſe the groveling ſoul,
And bid it pant for more than earthly bliſs.
Then ſhow Heaven's opening glories to my eyes;
And I will view thee as the fount of light,
Which pierc'd old Chaos to his depth profound,
While all his native horrors ſtood reveal'd.

Yet more I aſk—Ah, STELLA! aid my pen
To paint the grateful rapture, to deſcribe
How the big heart, exulting, ſcarcely beats,
And joy too vaſt oppreſſes all the frame!
The extacy in languor leaves the ſoul,
And all her ſlacken'd faculties relax.
The web of Gratitude 's ſo finely wrought,
Thought hardly dares to touch it; ſoft'ning time,
And frequent pauſes, give it ſtrength of growth,
E'en to oppreſſion. Oh, delightful pain!
My ſoul wants firm ſupport. The gloomy joy

I once

I once preferr'd, and thought the nobler choice,
Has loſt its reliſh; grand miſtake of fools,
In ſullen ſelf abſorb'd! Lo! far eſtrang'd
From ſocial joy, I fix'd my woe-fraught eye
Where riches blaz'd upon a murky ſoul,
And ſerv'd to light its errors to the world:
I met th' ungenial influence, bright, but cold,
And, hardening by th' encounter, deep I ſunk
Abſtracted—Scorn and Silence led the way.
No matter whither:—The too gaudy Sun
Shines not for me; no bed of Nature yields
Her varied ſweets; no muſic wakes the grove;
No vallies blow, no waving grain uprears
Its tender ſtalk to cheer my coming hour;
But horrid Silence broods upon my ſoul,
With wing deep-drench'd in Miſery's torpid dews.
That heart which once had join'd the laughing train,
Whoſe guiltleſs rapture flew on Fancy's wing,
Nor once ſuſpected thus to feel the gripe

Of iron-claw'd Deſpair, now yields to pangs,
To agonies more exquiſite than Death;
That is—to live. O, Nature! ſhriek no more,
I have no anſwer for thy thrilling voice;
Go, melt the ſoul, leſs frozen in her pow'rs,
And bid her weep o'er miſeries not her own;
Hold up the fainting babe who ſighs its wants,
So mutely incoherent; mark the head
Which age and woe bend tremulous to earth;
Whoſe lamp, now quivering in the ſocket, calls
In haſte for aid, ne'er finds it, and goes out,
Plead thou for thoſe, but never talk of aid
For miſeries like mine, which mock relief.

Thus deſperately I reaſon'd, madly talk'd—
Thus horrid as I was, of rugged growth,
More ſavage than the nightly-prowling wolf;
She feels what Nature taught; I, wilder far,
Oppos'd her dictates—but my panting ſoul

Now ſhivers in the agony of change,
As inſects tremble in the doubtful hour
Of tranſmigration; loth to loſe the form
Of various tints, its fondly cheriſh'd pride;
Diſrob'd like me they fall, and boaſt no more.

STELLA, how ſtrong thy gentle argument!
By thee convinc'd, I ſcorn the iron lore,
The ſavage virtues of untutor'd minds:
In thy mild rhetoric dwells a ſocial love
Beyond my wild conceptions, optics falſe!
Thro' which I falſely judg'd of poliſh'd life.

This is the ſullen curſe of ſurly ſouls,
To diſbelieve the virtues which they feel not.
Ah, STELLA! I'm a convert; thou haſt tun'd
My ruſting powers to the bright ſtrain of joy:
My chill'd ideas quit their frozen pole
Of blank Deſpair, and, gently uſher'd in

By

By grateful Rapture, meet thy genial warmth:
'Tis more than joy, or joy to an extreme;
Then teach my honeſt heart to feel more faint,
More moderate in her grateful change, or lend
Fair Elocution, who the Mimic aids,
To paint in brighteſt hues the unfelt joy.

Accept the wild and untaught rapture, form'd
From ſimple Nature, in her artleſs guiſe;
Yet in its wildneſs charming to exceſs
To ſouls like thine, diſtaſteful to the vain,
Who reliſh nothing honeſt; nothing love
But flattering ſtrains, trick'd out with every art
Of gaudy Eloquence, and trim Deceit.

THOUGHTS

ON THE

AUTHOR's OWN DEATH.

WRITTEN WHEN VERY YOUNG.

THUS, when the fatal ſtroke of Death 's deſign'd,
On oozy banks th' expiring ſwan reclin'd,
Her own ſad requiem ſings in languid note,
While o'er the ſtream the dying echoes float.

But, ah! can youth dwell on the tragic part?
Can I deſcribe the trembling, panting heart?
In Fancy's frolic age can I relate
The pangs, the terrors of a dying ſtate?

Yes

Yes—tho' unskill'd, I'll the grim shade pursue,
And bring the distant terror to my view;
Dwell on the horrors of that gloomy hour;
Death, made familiar, loses half his power.
Peace then, ye passions of ungovern'd youth,
Foes to reflection, enemies to truth!
Let me, unruffled by your clamorous voice,
Make the drear regions of the tomb my choice;
And while sad Fancy paints the dismal scene,
Where restless ghosts by midnight moons are seen
Stalk o'er the gloomy grave, Muse! be it thine
To rouse the vain, the giddy, and supine,
Who Pleasure's rounds pursue; while young Desire
Wakes the gay dream, and feeds the dangerous fire:
From these I fly—and now, my pensive soul,
Mark the harsh scream of yon death-boding owl;
Perhaps she calls some lingering, tardy ghost
To smell the world, ere the dread hour be lost
That parts the night from morn. Come, restless souls,
Relax from torture; you whom Fate controuls

To purge your earthly crimes in liquid fire,
In anguiſh plung'd, till ages ſhall expire;
(This, Rome's grand tenet) ſin thus waſh'd away,
Pure, bright, and cleans'd, you'll wing to endleſs day.
Preſumption, hold! Lo, o'er yon miſty tomb
Leans a ſad ſpectre, and bemoans the doom
Of never-erring Juſtice; heavenly power!
Support and guard me in this gloomy hour
Of dread inquiry!—" Say, thou wretched ſoul,
O teach a young, raſh, inexperienced fool,
What 'tis to die, and where thou wing'dſt thy way,
When turn'd a wanderer from thy houſe of clay?
Did'ſt tread ſoft lawns, or ſeek Elyſian groves,
Where Poets feign the lover's ſpirit roves?
Or, on light pinions cut the cloſing air,
And to each planetary world repair?
Or, guideleſs, ſtray where diſmal groans reſound,
And forked lightnings quiver on the ground?

Or

Or did ſad fiends thy unhous'd ſpirit meet,
And with ſhrill yellings the poor trembler greet
To the dark world? Deſcribe that ſcene of woe
Which thou haſt felt, and may I never know!"
"Thou'lt know, indeed," it anſwers with a groan,
"The pangs of death too ſure ſhall be thy own;
Pains yet unfelt muſt ſeize thy every part,
And Death's cold horrors hover round thy heart;
Thy dying eyes fix'd on ſome darling friend,
While ſtrong convulſions their wild orbs extend;
One gaſp, and deep eternity in view,
The ſoul ſhoots forth, and groans a laſt adieu.
I dare no more—but Oh! too curious maid,
Seek not to pierce th' impenetrable ſhade
Which wraps futurity; thou 'rt ſure to die;
Reſt there, nor farther ſearch, nor queſtion why;
Scan not Omnipotence—of that beware;
Oft the too curious eye is dimm'd by blank deſpair."

Farewel, poor Ghoſt! ye horrors of the night,
Begone, nor more my ſhudd'ring ſoul affright;
The queſtion unreſolv'd I ſoon ſhall know,
Then let me haſte from this ſad ſcene of woe.

Henceforth, vain Pleaſure, I renounce thy joy,
Enchanting Fair, who tempt'ſt but to deſtroy;
Ye thoughtleſs maids who tranſient dreams purſue,
No more my moments muſt be loſt with you;
No more my ſoul in empty mirth ſhall ſhare,
Or fondly reliſh pleaſures ting'd with care.

And thou, all-merciful! omniſcient Power!
O teach me to redeem each miſ-ſpent hour;
In youth the mind's beſt gifts moſt ſtrongly ſhine,
Ah! let them not too ſuddenly decline!
In mercy add a few remaining years,
The grave ſhall loſe its ſting, my ſoul ſhall loſe its fears.

To a FRIEND;

ON VALENTINE's DAY.

THO' blooming ſhepherds hail this day
With love, the ſubject of each lay,
Yet friendſhip tunes my artleſs ſong,
To thee the grateful themes belong.

STREPHON, I never will repine,
Tho' deſtin'd not thy Valentine;
O'er friendſhip's nobler heights we'll rove,
Nor heed the ſoft'ning voice of love.

Strangers to Paſſion's tyrant reign,
Careleſs, we'll range the happier plain,
Where all thoſe calmer joys we'll prove,
Which wait ſublime platonic love.

Yet I'll allow a future day,
When friendſhip muſt at laſt give way;
When thou, forgetful ſhalt reſign
The maid who wrote this Valentine.

Think not, my friend, I dream of *love*,
That with ſome happier maid thou'lt prove;
Friendſhip alone is my deſign
In this officious Valentine.

Yet, when that victor God ſhall reign,
And conquer'd Friendſhip quits the plain,
This gentle whiſperer captive take,
'T will all thy former kindneſs wake.

But if its pleadings you deny,
And fain wou'd have remembrance die,
Then to devouring flames consign
My too ill-fated Valentine.

Another VALENTINE,

TO ANOTHER PERSON.

SAY, gentle Shepherd, ſhall this day,
Propitious to my amorous lay,
Infuſe thro' all thy vital frame
The tender, trembling, thrilling flame?

This day prefers the lover's prayers,
This day the yielding fair one hears;
Shall blooming STREPHON then repine,
At being hail'd a Valentine?

O! turn

O! turn thine eyes, and view yon dove,
He'll charm thy every ſenſe to love;
While, from the bending ſpray, his mate
Shall love-inſpired notes repeat.

Then, whilſt thy eager charming eyes
Run o'er theſe lines, may love ariſe
Within thy breaſt to equal mine,
Nor read in vain my Valentine.

My powerleſs pen deſpairs to name,
What raptures wait a mutual flame;
Then be thy ſofter wiſhes mine,
I'll bleſs the day of Valentine.

To Mrs. V——N.

SEQUESTER'D from the buſy whirl of man,
Permit ſoft Fancy in the vale to ſtray;
In dark obſcurity my life began,
Where Science ſcorn'd to cheer the dreary way.

Bright ſentiment, if unimprov'd, muſt die,
And great ideas, unaſſiſted, fall;
On Learning's wing we pierce th' empyreal ſky;
But Nature's untaught efforts are but ſmall.

Pardon, bright fair! my hapleſs fate deplore,
Nor ſcorn the grateful, tho' unletter'd line;
The Eaſtern ſlave's permitted to adore,
When in bright Sol he ſees a Godhead ſhine.

Heaven

Heaven ſpurns him not, but ſpares the untaught mind,
Who ne'er religion's nobler truths has prov'd;
Thus, in thy boſom, where each virtue's join'd,
Let Pity plead where Reaſon can't approve.

To chace the gloom of ſolitude's lone hour,
In this ſad boſom deſert made by woe,
May buſy memory's ever pleaſing power,
In grateful viſion ſtill your form beſtow.

Belov'd idea, on my heart impreſt,
Which time or anguiſh never ſhall efface,
Till Death ſhall ſternly bid its motion reſt,
And in its ſtead his barbed dart ſhall place.

Not valued leſs, with gratitude refin'd,
Shall my warm heart your honour'd partner ſhare;
With joy I'll own how great, how good his mind,
And hail each heavenly virtue planted there.

O! had

O! had there ſtepp'd before offended Heaven,
But ten ſo perfect for a guilty race,
The dread, tremendous word had ne'er been given,
Nor ſtreaming fires have purg'd the blaſted place.

How different thoſe who waſte the thoughtleſs hour,
And, jocund, dance to Folly's trifling lay;
Death, maſk'd, oft ſhares the ball and feſtive bower,
And beckons, unawares, the ſoul away.

Aghaſt ſhe views the dark and dismal vale,
Where ghoſts of long-departed Pleaſures roam;
Sad comforts! where their poor expedients fail,
Say, what pleas'd guide ſhall waft the trembler home?

O, Miſery! readier than the pitying eye
Of Heaven, why do thy terrors round me wait?
Avaunt! my ſpirits mount with extacy,
For V——'s bright virtues ſpeak a happier fate.

Then

Then may not I, with humbleſt hope aſpire,
At diſtance follow where they boldly ſtray'd
Ah, no! I want that ſtrong, celeſtial fire,
Which, eagle-like, dares the Meridian ray.

Capacious virtues fill th' extenſive mind,
That mind which this low world could ne'er contain;
O'er peopled orbs it wanders unconfin'd;
Yet ſounds of woe oft lure it back again;

And fix'd, like NIOBE, o'er the rueful ſcene
Of human miſ'ry the mild ſpirit ſtands;
No more the boſom boaſts a ſtate ſerene,
But melts, diſtreſs'd by Pity's ſoft commands.

Diſſolv'd in woe, it ſcorns the gay parade
Of dazzling pride, and with the mourner mourns;
Flies with pale Miſ'ry to the dreary ſhade,
And brings it back by ſoft, yet ſwift returns.

Rais'd as I am to ſweet domeſtic joy
By bounteous V——N, will ſhe the line refuſe?
You who, like Heaven, wou'd ſave and not deſtroy,
Say, will you ſcorn the poor unpoliſh'd Muſe?

Oft when the frugal meal ſalutes my eyes,
Big rapture heaves my late deſponding breaſt;
I ſee your form in every bleſſing riſe,
It ſmiles content, and bids my ſorrows reſt.

Hope, lovely phantom! is, and ſhall be mine,
She hovers round, amidſt this waſte of woe;
Points my once cheerleſs ſoul to views ſublime,
From Earth's ſad ſcene, and Miſ'ry's wreck below.

Pour down, great God! thy choiceſt bleſſings here,
Such virtues merit thy peculiar love;
O! make their beauteous progeny thy care,
And lift them late to all thy joys above!

A

FRAGMENT.

—My ſoul is out of tune,
No harmony reigns here, 'tis diſcord all:
Be dumb, ſweet Choriſters, I heed you not;
Then why thus ſwell your liquid throats, to cheer
A wretch undone, for ever loſt to joy,
And mark'd for ruin? Seek yon leafy grove,
Indulgent bliſs there waits you; ſhun this ſpot
Drear, joyleſs, vacant, as my waſted ſoul,
Diſrob'd of all her bliſs: here heave, my heart,
Here ſigh thy woes away; unheard the groan,

Unſeen

Unſeen the falling tear; in this lone wild
No buſy fool invades thy hoarded griefs,
And ſmiles in ignorance at what he feels not.
Yet, yet indulge not, liſt'ning winds may catch
Coherent ſighs, and waft them far away,
Where levity holds high the ſenſeleſs roar
Of laughter, and pale woe, aghaſt, retires,
Or, ſhou'd my woes be to the winds diſſolv'd,
No longer mine, once paſt the quiv'ring lip,
Like flying atoms in the ſightleſs air,
Some might deſcend on the gay, gowning herd;
But few, how few, wou'd reach the feeling mind!

Officious Truth! unwelcome gueſt to moſt,
Yet I will own thee, and bid Hope good night,
Fond, ſoothing flatterer! Nineteen years are paſt,
Since firſt I liſten'd to her pleaſing lore;
Ah, me! how bright ſhe painted future ſcenes,
And ſweetly ſpoke of bleſſings yet unborn!

Now,

Now, fond Deceiver, where's the promis'd good?
But, Oh! thou'rt lovely, and I'll ne'er accuſe
Or hate thee, tho' we never meet again.

With thee, Deſpair, muſt I then tread the path
Of tedious life, nor caſt one look behind,
On all the piles of bliſs gay Hope had rais'd?
But Heaven thought otherwiſe—O, generous world!
Thou who ſo frankly hold'ſt th' embitter'd draught,
Accept my ſurly thanks, and few are due
Where little is beſtow'd. The reaſoner raves,
Lifts the hard eye, and with long-winded ſpeech,
And ſelf-applauding dialect, condemns
My mind, thus ſtraying from the trodden path:
I heed you not, nor have I time to ſpin
The thread of argument; yet fain wou'd know
The ready road to reſt. Teach me, ye wiſe,
You who have trod the endleſs, endleſs whirl
Of meaſureleſs conjecture, ſtill upheld

By brilliant Fancy's rapture-giving wing:
O you! whoſe ſpirits rove beyond yon orbs,
To find the realms of reſt, for ſuch there are,
To prove a home when the ſad ſoul ſhall need it.
Imagination wanders, while the eye
Seems far extended, tho' the ſenſeleſs balls
Diſtinguiſh nought, but, every ſenſe call'd in,
Is buried in the duſky, deep receſs
Of meditation. What's the grand reſult?
Ye ſtudious ſages, where's the fix'd abode?
Where's that eternal home, beyond the grave?
Oh! deign to tell a fellow-wretch like me,
Unwilling to be nothing; are not you?
Elſe why this ſearch—and where's the great ſucceſs?
Say, have you found it? can you teach the road
Which thither leads? Ah, no! th' accounts brought home
Differ ſo far, millions of Heavens are formed;
Each vain philoſopher, by pride miſled,

Preſents you a futurity his own;
By that ſecur'd, the ſelf-ſufficient ſage,
Indifferent, views the group of anxious ſouls
Searching the path to reſt; if his they miſs,
He ſwears no other way can e'er be found,
And then conſigns them o'er to endleſs woe.

Oh! narrow notion of a God ſupreme!
Oh! barbarous portrait of a God all love!
I'll think no more. Ye deep-diſtracting doubts,
Bewilder not my ſoul; for ſee, the page
Of boundleſs Mercy, and of Chriſtian Faith,
Clears up the doubtful future; all is peace,
Hope dawns, an earneſt of the perfect day,

ON THE

Sudden Death of a FRIEND.

" APPEAR, thou ſightleſs Miniſter of Death,
" Go ſeek the ſpot where guiltleſs joys reſide,
" Seize DELIA's frame, ſuſpend at once her breath,
" And from its long-lov'd home the wond'ring ſoul divide.

" Be deaf to all, nor heed the plaintive moan
" Of weeping huſband, parent, child, or friend;
" 'Tis my high will that ſhe attend my throne,
" Where flow thoſe perfect joys which never ſhall have end."

So ſpake th' Omnipotent. The ſpirit heard,
With azure pinions veil'd he ſkims the air,
The heavenly regions quickly diſappear'd,
He, unperceiv'd, alights beſide the happy pair.

Amaz'd he view'd this ſeat of humble love,
Content and joy in every breaſt elate,
One moment mourn'd his errand from above;
While mid' the cheerful group the thoughtleſs victim ſate.

With eye aſkance he aims the deadly blow,
Nor dares to look while he directs the dart;
No more her cheeks with purple bluſhes glow,
But all the ſpirits ruſh to guard the fainting heart.

In vain, in vain! the heart refuſes aid,
An iron ſlumber ſeals her heavy eyes;

She ſinks in death—th' aſtoniſh'd ſoul, diſmay'd,
Burſts thro' the doors of life, and ſeeks more friendly
ſkies.

Hail, Spirit, diſengag'd from cumbrous clay!
Let not our tears retard thy bliſsful flight;
The ſigh diſſolves in faith; purſue thy way,
'Till Heaven's full joys ſhall open on thy raviſh'd
ſight.

O, THYRSIS! raiſe thy low declining head,
Nor ſink beneath this mighty weight of woe,
Mourn not thy love, nor think thy DELIA dead;
She lives where boundleſs joys ſhall ever, ever flow.

To Mr. R——,

ON HIS

Benevolent Scheme for reſcuing Poor Children from Vice and Miſery,

BY PROMOTING

SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

O, R——! my timid ſoul would fain aſpire
To rapture ſuch as thine; to the pure zeal
Which fires thy ſoul in bleſt Religion's cauſe.
Say, can I catch one faint, one glimmering ſpark,
To warm my cheerleſs boſom? Will the flame
Which ever feeds thy fervency of ſoul,
Illumine mine? Ah, no! on me 'twere loſt;

My faculties, my poverty of thought,
Wou'd ever diſappoint the grand deſign,
And render great commiſſions all abortive.

Vain were the hope to ſave a ruin'd world!
Ev'n Jesu's ſufferings ne'er convinc'd the whole;
Then ſhall an atom the fix'd axis move,
And win a world from hell? Thou greatly dar'ſt,
Yet limited thy power; ſtand forth, ye few!
You who wou'd give a luſtre to your name,
And prove the grand impreſſion of Jehovah;
Who weep, like R——, the glory of your God,
Defac'd, demoliſh'd, beauty trod in duſt;
Leave not the wreck deſerted on the beach,
Where Ignorance, Vice, and loud-mouth'd Reprobation,
Exulting yell, and wring the melting ſoul:
O! freeze, to hear the hoary-headed ſinner,
With ceaſeleſs profanation, taint the air;

Grown

Grown old in dark ſtupidity, he treads,
Fearleſs, tho' feeble; on the verge of fate
Sin leaves him not; and innate flames of vice
Still fiercely burn; the fact exiſts in will:
The laſt remain of life preſents a gloom
Which frights the ſhrinking ſoul; lo! back ſhe ſtarts,
Struck with dire horror, loth to hear the ſound,
The dreadful ſummons of offended Heaven—
She lingers—the ſtrong blaſt to atoms rends
The frame which held her.—O! ye better ſouls,
Ye nobler few, who ſlumber in your race,
Tho' well begun, and forwarded with hope,
Say, will you ſee a fellow-ſpirit loſt,
Thus ſwallow'd in the ever-yawning gulf,
That frights the mental eye, and e'en appals
The man who firmeſt ſtands, nor lend your aid
To ſave him, as a ſoul once meant for Heaven?
O, think! the coming hour will ſoon be your's;

Let not a form which bears your Maker's image
Defeat the end of being: know 'tis your's,
In heavenly tints to dip the infant ſoul;
To raiſe the new idea, lift it high,
Ev'n to JEHOVAH's Throne: the ductile mind,
Pliant as wax, ſhall wear the mould you give;
Sharp Gratitude you've call'd to life, ſhall cut,
In ciphers deep, the now expanded heart;
And, ev'n beyond the chambers of the grave,
The joyous ſpirit ſhall your records bear,
To meet your eyes when trembling worlds expire.
What then ſhall live, or ſtand in that dread hour,
But acts like theſe, when panting ſpirits call
For every little teſt to aid their plea?
May your's reſound, ſupported in the blaſt
By grateful Infants, and by ripen'd Man,
To whom you gave perfection. Angels ſmile,
And ſongs of glory ſhake the vault of Heaven.

Not to the vain I lift my poor appeal,
Who never yet have dar'd to own a ſoul,
Or name a Deity with heart-felt joy;
'Tis to the mind who feels like generous R——,
Whoſe heart can mourn, whoſe manly eye can melt,
At the dread thought of human ſouls deſtroy'd.

What pen, tho' dipp'd in horror's deepeſt dye,
Can juſtly paint the poor unletter'd tribe,
Aſſembled in a group? The florid youth,
Robuſt, impetuous, ardent in his ſtrength,
Lively and bounding as the ſkipping roe,
The bluſh of beauty glowing on his cheek;
Within, a ſtrong epitome of hell;
There vices rage, and paſſions wildly roar;
Strong appetites, which never knew reſtraint,
Scream for indulgence, till the ſoul diſtract,
Seizes in haſte the draught of poiſons mix'd
When ſin began, and ruin'd nature fell;

The dire infuſion ſtronger grows by time;
And ſtill fermenting, ſins on ſins ariſe,
In order horrible. Thus ever loſt,
The poor benighted ſoul ne'er hopes to light
On GILEAD's ſovereign balm, its worth not known,
Or long miſus'd; ah! hapleſs, hapleſs ſtate,
Where Immortality itſelf is ſick,
And hopes annihilation. Dreadful thought!
Poor miſerable refuge! poorer ſtill
The ſoul who hopes to find it. O, befriend,
Ere 'tis too late, the tender, budding mind,
Now choak'd by ignorance; cheriſh the ſpark,
The particle of Godhead, which impels
To good if nouriſh'd, if o'erwhelm'd muſt die!

Ye ſacred few, who ſhudder at the ſound
Of blaſphemy, breath'd from the tender lip
Whoſe liſping accent Innocence ſhou'd guide,
Whoſe heart ſhou'd white-rob'd Purity adorn:
O, think,

O, think, how loſt the beauteous reprobate
Of twelve or fourteen years, nurs'd up in ſin;
On whoſe ſweet form her bounteous Maker ſmil'd,
And gave, as the grand ſtroke of fair Creation:
Her paſſions ſoft and gentle; pure her thought;
Her ſoul ſo Angel-like, it ſpoke perfection;
Eyes form'd to bend the ſtubborn breaſt of man
To more than human ſoftneſs; accents mild
To charm his ear, and ſooth his ſullen ſoul,
When panting in the iron graſp of woe!
O! ſhe was meant ſo perfect, fair, and good,
That Angels with unuſual ardor gaz'd,
Bleſt the fair form, and hail'd the joyous hour!
But ah! down, down ſhe ſinks, for ever loſt,
For ever tarniſh'd, blaſted in the bud;
The early falſehood points the flowing tongue,
The artful leer deforms the eager eye;
The ſmile oft practis'd, deeply to deceive;
Each ſoft allurement Heaven ſo frankly gave,

All,

All, all devoted to eternal ſhame:
Charming in ſin, too oft ſhe meets her fate,
So early, that the moſt obdurate weeps,
And gives that pity ſhe was form'd to raiſe.

Awake, ye rich, that ſleep! awake to ſave!
And infants, yet unborn, in choral ſong,
Shall bleſs the hand which form'd a ſocial father,
A father on whoſe lip inſtruction hangs,
Who ſnatches from the burning flame the brand!

The poor illiterate, chill'd by freezing want,
Within whoſe walls pale Penury ſtill ſits,
With icy hand impreſſing every meal,
Cannot divide his ſlender, hard-earn'd mite
Betwixt his bodily and mental wants;
The ſoul muſt go—for hunger loudly pleads,
And Nature will be anſwer'd; thus his race,
Envelop'd, groping, ſink in vulgar toils;

To eat and ſleep includes the ſoul's beſt wiſh;
And mean deceit, and treacherous, low-phras'd guile,
Fill the vaſt ſpace for better purpoſe given.

Oppreſs'd like you, ſo AMRAM's ſon once felt,
O'erburthen'd with a groſs inconſtant race;
Fain wou'd ye to their promis'd CANAAN guide
Theſe wretched wanderers, lead them to their reſt,
As nurſing fathers bear the ſucking babe;
Fain wou'd ye to the ſheltering hive allure,
And fix the ſwarm where endleſs pleaſures flow.

* Take off, great GOD! ſome portion of thy ſpirit,
Too much for one weak form; o'erpower'd he ſinks;
Yet glories in the flame; and fainting thus,
Wou'd lift a world to Heaven. Omniſcient Power!
Bring forward yet thy ſeventy elect!

* Not wiſhing to diminiſh a ſpirit of Religion, but in alluſion to the Second Chapter of NUMBERS, Verſe 17; "And I will take "off that ſpirit which is upon thee, and I will put it upon them."

Bid

Bid them to thy great mandate fix their ſeal,
And loudly ſound—" Ye choſen, aid my people;
Guide them, I charge you, thro' the dreary wilds,
Support the faint, and tell the lazy-blind,
Who, mole-like, never ſaw, nor ever wiſh'd it;
O, tell them, 'tis in Mercy you are given;
That unto you I gave extenſive ſouls,
Great faculties, and ample means, to ſave
Souls I thought worth creating. Then rejoice,
That you are thus commiſſion'd; open'd fair
To *you* the path of glory; while *their* ſouls
Wander in darkneſs, and deſpair to find
Salvation without help. To you I give
The means; then anſwer well your ſacred charge."

Ye Heaven-attempting ſouls, where virtues lie
Liſtleſs, inactive, waiting but the call
Of great JEHOVAH, liſten to his voice,
A voice ne'er heard in vain; hark! hark! it ſounds

From

From Miſery's loweſt ſhed; the accent ſoft,
The humble ſigh, the infant's early tear,
The huſband's ſtifled, ſympathetic groan,
The mother's feelings, more than ever felt,
Tho' borne in ſilence and in penſive mood.
Theſe are all ſhades in which the Godhead 's ſeen;
Well felt thoſe woes where great Religion ſits
On the houſe-top, and ſheds her heavenly dews
On the poor group;—be't your's to fix her there.
In dreſs like this, Omniſcience ſoftly tries
Your friendly doors, and thus diſguis'd, oft meets
The ſtern repulſe, and virtue-killing frown.

To Mrs. M——S.

PARDON, much honour'd Fair! this humble lay,
Nor ſcorn the tribute Gratitude may pay;
No rapturous Muſe e'er warm'd my ruſtic breaſt,
Nor dare I own the bright exalted gueſt:
Far flies the Muſe where radiant Science reigns;
Inſpires the ſoul, and elevates her ſtrains;
Then rapture, melody, and ſenſe conſpire,
And PHOEBUS fiercely twangs the ſprightly lyre;
Far let her fly—if Gratitude be mine,
Her voice ſhall match the whole harmonious Nine;
The full-fraught heart, with fiercer ardors riſe,
And pierce, reſiſtleſs, thro' yon azure ſkies;

Nor pauſes ſhort of the Celeſtial Throne,
But ſeeks the ear ſhe's certain is her own;
There loudly ſounds—a voice by Mercy given,
Whilſt echoes vibrate thro' the vaults of Heaven,
There ſounds your name, while liſt'ning Angels bend
The well-tun'd harp, and to the tale attend.
In that great day when mingled nations ſtand—
Some wiſh, ſome dread JEHOVAH's laſt command,
Shall not my little ones, with ardor raiſe
Your plaudit high, who prop their infant days;
Whoſe voice has call'd them from the depths of woe,
Suppreſs'd the ſigh, forbad the tear to flow?

Low on the earth, by anguiſh cruſh'd, I lay—
I mourn'd the night, nor hail'd the coming day,
When bright AURORA tipp'd the Eaſtern ſkies,
Hearts bleſs'd with plenty bade thē Goddeſs riſe;
Not ſo with me—to Miſery reſign'd,
On her cold lap my wretched head reclin'd;

Around, grim horrors take their ghaſtly ſtand,
And Famine executes her dire command,
Nor once relents;—the tear reluctant flows,
Not for my own, but for my infants' woes:
The Stoic's ſullen gloom had fill'd my ſoul,
Forbad the ſigh, and check'd the tears that roll;
Ev'n ſmiling Hope, ſoft ſoother of the mind,
Like MILTON's Guardian Angel, had reſign'd
Her charge as loſt; homeward to Heaven ſhe flies,
And grim Deſpair, and all her furies riſe;
O, diſmal Fiend! to thee I give the world,
From all its joys, and ſhadowy viſions hurl'd;
The conteſt o'er, eternal worlds are mine,
Where ranſom'd ſpirits taſte repoſe divine.

TO

STELLA;

ON A

Viſit to Mrs. MONTAGU.

UNEQUAL, loſt to the aſpiring claim,
I neither aſk, nor own th' immortal name
Of Friend; ah, no! its ardors are too great,
My ſoul too narrow, and too low my ſtate;
STELLA! ſoar on, to nobler objects true,
Pour out your ſoul with your lov'd MONTAGU;
But, ah! ſhou'd either have a thought to ſpare,
Slight, trivial, neither worth a ſmile or tear,

Let it be mine;—when glowing raptures riſe,
And each, aſpiring, ſeeks her native ſkies;
When Fancy wakes the ſoul to extacy,
And the rapt mind is touch'd with Deity,
Quick let me from the hallow'd ſpot retire,
Where ſacred Genius lights his awful fire.

Cruſh'd as I am, by Fortune's adverſe power,
I hail the joys which wait thy happier hour;
To hear the muſic of *her* matchleſs tongue,
On which the nameleſs ſweets of wit are hung;
What bliſs the friendſhip of the wiſe to ſhare,
Of ſoul ſuperior, and of virtues rare!
Where Genius in familiar converſe ſits,
Crowns real worth, and blaſts pretending Wits;
Where great ideas, fed by Fancy, glow,
And ſoul-expanding notes in rapture flow;
Where pointed thought in poliſh'd diction dreſt,
With every grace aſſaults the yielding breaſt;

O, powers

O, powers of Genius! even the Miſer's heart,
In the ſweet tranſport bears a tranſient part;
He thrills, unconſcious whence his pleaſures come,
Who ne'er had dreamt of rapture but at home;
But, ah! the ſlight impreſſion quickly dies,
Or on the noxious ſurface floating lies;
The momentary virtue ne'er was brought
To frame one bounteous deed, one generous thought;
His harden'd ſpirit only knows to ſhun
The lore of wiſdom, and the genial ſun
Of warm humanity; ah! joyleſs breaſt,
Which never hail'd a ſelf-rewarding gueſt!
Then fly, cold wretch, to thy congenial cell,
And quit the haunts where ſweet ſenſations dwell.

How has your bounty cheer'd my humble ſtate,
And chang'd the colour of my gloomy fate!
Still ſhall your image ſooth my penſive ſoul,
When ſlow-pac'd moments, big with miſchiefs, roll;

Still ſhall I, eager, wait your wiſh'd return,
From that bright Fair who decks a SHAKESPEARE'S urn
With deathleſs glories; every ardent prayer
Which gratitude can waft from ſouls ſincere,
Each warm return to generous bounty due,
Shall warm my heart for you and MONTAGU.
Bleſt pair! O, had not ſouls like yours been given,
The ſtupid Atheiſt well might doubt a Heaven;
Convinc'd, he now deſerts his gloomy ſtand,
Owns MIND the nobleſt proof of a creating hand.
GALEN's converſion, by externals wrought,
Dropt far beneath ſublimity of *Thought*;
But cou'd he thoſe ſuperior wonders find,
Which form and actuate your nobler mind,
How wou'd the Heathen, ſtruck with vaſt ſurpriſe,
Atoms deny while ſpirit fill'd his eyes.

To the Same;

ON HER

ACCUSING THE AUTHOR OF FLATTERY,

AND OF

Aſcribing to the Creature that Praiſe which is due only to the Creator.

EXCUSE me, STELLA, ſunk in humble ſtate,
With more than needful awe I view the great;
No gloſſy diction e'er can aid the thought,
Firſt ſtamp'd in ignorance, with error fraught.
My friends I've prais'd—they ſtood in heavenly guiſe
When firſt I ſaw them, and my mental eyes

Shall in that heavenly rapture view them ſtill,
For mine's a ſtubborn and a ſavage will;
No cuſtoms, manners, or ſoft arts I boaſt,
On my rough ſoul your niceſt rules are loſt;
Yet ſhall unpoliſh'd gratitude be mine,
While STELLA deigns to nurſe the ſpark divine,
A ſavage pleads—let e'en her errors move,
And your forgiving ſpirit melt in love,
O, cheriſh gentle Pity's lambent flame,
From Heaven's own boſom the ſoft pleader came!
Then deign to bleſs a ſoul, who'll ne'er degrade
Your gift, tho' ſharpeſt miſeries invade!
You I acknowledge, next to bounteous Heaven,
Like his, your influence chears where'er 'tis given;
Bleſt in diſpenſing! gentle STELLA, hear
My only, ſhort, but pity-moving prayer,
That thy great ſoul may ſpare the ruſtic Muſe,
Whom Science ever ſcorn'd, and errors ſtill abuſe.

SOLILOQUY.

——WHAT folly to complain,
Or throw my woes againſt the face of Heaven?
Ills ſelf-created prey upon my ſoul,
And rob each coming hour of ſoften'd Peace.
What then? Is Fate to blame? I choſe diſtreſs;
Free will was mine; I might have ſtill been happy
From a fore-knowledge of the dire effect,
And the ſad bondage of reſiſtleſs love.
I knew the ſtruggles of a wounded mind,
Not ſelf-indulging, and not prone to vice,
Knew all the terrors of conflicting paſſion,
Too ſtubborn foe, and ever unſubdued;

Yet

Yet raſhly parley'd with the mighty victor.
Infectious miſts upon my ſenſes hang,
More deadly than LETHEAN dews which fall
From SOMNUS' bough, on the poor wearied wretch,
Whoſe woes are fully told!——
The dire contagion creeps thro' all my frame,
Seizes my heart, and drinks my ſpirit up.
Ah! fatal poiſon, whither doſt thou tend?
Tear not my ſoul with agonizing pains;
There needs no more; the world to me is loſt,
And all the whirl of life-unneeded thrift.
I ſicken at the Sun, and fly his beams,
Like ſome ſad ghoſt which loves the moonleſs night,
And penſive ſhuns the morn. The deep receſs
Where dim-ey'd Melancholy ſilent ſits,
Beckoning the poor deſponding, ſlighted wretch,
Suits well. 'Tis here I find a gloomy reſt;
'Tis here the fool's loud clatter leaves me ſtill,
Nor force unwilling anſwers to their tale:

But,

But, ah! this gloom, this lethargy of thought,
Yields not repoſe; I ſigh the hour away;
The next rolls on, and leaves me ſtill oppreſt.
But, oh! ſwift-footed Time, thou ceaſeleſs racer,
Thou who haſt chac'd five thouſand years before thee,
With all their great events, and minute trifles,
Haſte, with redoubled ſpeed, bring on the hour,
When dark Oblivion's duſky veil ſhall ſhroud
Too painful Memory.———

ADDRESS

TO

FRIENDSHIP.

FRIENDSHIP! thou nobleſt ardor of the ſoul!
Immortal eſſence! languor's beſt ſupport!
Chief dignifying proof of glorious man!
Firm cement of the world! endearing tie,
Which binds the willing ſoul, and brings along
Her chaſteſt, ſtrongeſt, and ſublimeſt powers!

All elſe the dregs of ſpirit. Love's ſoft flame,
Bewildering, leads th' infatuated ſoul;

Levels,

Levels, depreſſes, wraps in endleſs miſts,
Contracts, diſſolves, enervates and enſlaves,
Relaxes, ſinks, diſtracts, while Fancy fills
Th' inflaming draught, and aids the calenture.
Intoxicating charm! yet well refin'd
By Virtue's brightening flame, pure it aſcends,
As incenſe in its grateful circles mounts,
Till, mixt and loſt, with Thee it boaſts thy name.

Thou unfound bleſſing! woo'd with eager hope,
As clowns the nightly vapour ſwift purſue,
And fain wou'd graſp to cheer their lonely way;
Vain the wide ſtretch, and vain the ſhorten'd breath,
For, ah! the bright deluſion onward flies,
While the ſad ſwain deceiv'd, now cautious treads
The common beaten track, nor quits it more.

Not unexiſting art thou, but ſo rare,
That delving ſouls ne'er find thee; 'tis to thee,

When

When found, if ever found, ſweet fugitive,
The noble mind opes all her richeſt ſtores;
Thy firm, ſtrong hold ſuits the courageous breaſt,
Where ſtubborn virtues dwell in ſecret league,
And each conſpires to fortify the reſt.

Etherial ſpirits alone may hope to prove
Thy ſtrong, yet ſoften'd rapture; ſoften'd more
When penitence ſucceeds to injury;
When, doubting pardon, the meek, pleading eye
On which the ſoul had once with pleaſure dwelt,
Swims in the tear of ſorrow and repentance.
The faultleſs mind with treble pity views
The tarniſh'd friend, who feels the ſting of ſhame;
'Tis then too little barely to *forgive*;
Nor can the ſoul reſt on that frigid thought,
But ruſhing ſwiftly from her Stoic heights,
With all her frozen feelings melted down
By Pity's genial beams, ſhe ſinks, diſtreſt,

Shares the contagion, and with lenient hand
Lifts the warm chalice fill'd with conſolation.

Yet Friendſhip's name oft decks the crafty lip,
With ſeeming virtue clothes the ruthleſs ſoul;
Grief-ſoothing notes, well feign'd to look like Truth,
Like an inſidious ſerpent ſoftly creep
To the poor, guileleſs, unſuſpecting heart,
Wind round in wily folds, and ſinking deep
Explore her ſacred treaſure, baſely heave
Her hoard of woes to an unpitying world;
Firſt ſooths, enſnares, expoſes and betrays.
What art thou, fiend, who thus uſurp'ſt the form
Of the ſoft Cherub? Tell me, by what name
The oſtentatious call thee, thou who wreck'ſt
The gloomy peace of ſorrow-loving ſouls?
Why thou art Vanity, ungenerous ſprite,
Who tarniſheſt the action deem'd ſo great,
And of ſoul-ſaving eſſence. But for thee,

How

How pure, how bright wou'd THERON's virtues ſhine;
And, but that *Thou* art incorp'rate with the flame,
Which elſe wou'd bleſs where'er its beams illume,
My grateful ſpirit had recorded here
Thy ſplendid ſeemings. Long I've known their worth.

O, 'tis the deepeſt error man can prove,
To fancy joys diſintereſted can live,
Indiſſoluble, pure, unmix'd with ſelf;
Why, 'twere to be immortal, 'twere to own
No part but ſpirit in this chilling gloom.

My ſoul 's ambitious, and its utmoſt ſtretch
Wou'd be, to own a friend—but that's deny'd.
Now, at this bold avowal, gaze, ye eyes,
Which kindly melted at my woe-fraught tale;
Start back, Benevolence, and ſhun the charge;
Soft bending Pity, fly the ſullen phraſe,
Ungrateful as it ſeems. My abject fate

Excites

Excites the willing hand of Charity,
The momentary ſigh, the pitying tear,
And inſtantaneous act of bounty bland,
To Miſery ſo kind; yet not to you,
Bounty, or Charity, or Mercy mild,
The penſive thought applies fair Friendſhip's name;
That name which never yet cou'd dare exiſt
But in equality . . . . . .
. . . . . .

TO THE

Honourable H——E W——E,

ON READING

The CASTLE of OTRANTO.

December, 1784.

TO praiſe thee, WALPOLE, aſks a pen divine,
And common ſenſe to me is hardly given;
BIANCA's Pen now owns the daring line,
And who expects *her* muſe ſhould drop from Heaven.

My fluttering tongue, light, ever veering round,
On Wiſdom's narrow point has never fix'd;
I dearly love to hear the ceaſeleſs ſound,
Where Noiſe and Nonſenſe are completely mix'd.

The

The empty tattle, true to female rules,
In which thy happier talents ne'er appear,
Is mine, nor mine alone, for mimic fools,
Who boaſt *thy* ſex, BIANCA's foibles wear.

Supreme in prate ſhall woman ever ſit,
While Wiſdom ſmiles to hear the ſenſeleſs ſquall;
Nature, who gave me tongue, deny'd me wit,
Folly I worſhip, and ſhe claims me all.

The drowſy eye, half-cloſing to the lid,
Stares on OTRANTO's walls; grim terrors riſe,
The horrid helmet ſtrikes my ſoul unbid,
And with thy CONRAD, lo! BIANCA dies.

Funereal plumes now wave; ALPHONSO's ghoſt
Frowns o'er my ſhoulder; ſilence aids the ſcene,
The taper's flame, in fancy'd blueneſs loſt,
Pale ſpectres ſhews, to MANFRED only ſeen.

Ah! MANFRED! thine are bitter draughts of woe,
Strong guſts of paſſion hurl thee on thy fate;
Tho' eager to elude, thou meet'ſt the blow,
And for RICARDO MANFRED weeps in ſtate.

By all the joys which treaſur'd virtues yield,
I feel thy agonies in WALPOLE's line;
Love, pride, revenge, by turns maintain the field,
And hourly tortures rend my heart for thine.

Hail, magic pen! that ſtrongly paint'ſt the ſoul,
Where fell Ambition holds his wildeſt roar;
The whirlwind rages to the diſtant pole,
And Virtue, ſtranded, pleads her cauſe no more.

Where's MANFRED's refuge? WALPOLE, tell me where?
Thy pen to great St. NICHOLAS points the eye;
E'en MANFRED calls to guard ALPHONSO's heir,
Tho' conſcious ſhame oft gives his tongue the lie.

MATILDA!

MATILDA! ah, how ſoft thy yielding mind,
When hard obedience cleaves thy timid heart!
How nobly ſtrong, when love and virtue join'd
To melt thy ſoul and take a lover's part!

Ah, rigid duties, which two ſouls divide!
Whoſe iron talons rend the panting breaſt!
Pluck the dear image from the widow'd ſide,
Where Love had lull'd its every care to reſt.

HYPOLITA! fond, paſſive to excels,
Her low ſubmiſſion ſuits not ſouls like mine;
BIANCA might have lov'd her MANFRED leſs,
Not offer'd leſs at great Religion's ſhrine.

Implicit Faith, all hail! Imperial man,
Exacts ſubmiſſion; reaſon we reſign;
Againſt our ſenſes we adopt the plan
Which Reverence, Fear, and Folly think divine.

But be it ſo, BIANCA ne'er ſhall prate,
Nor ISABELLA's equal powers reveal;
You MANFREDS boaſt your power, and prize your ſtate;
We ladies our omnipotence conceal.

But, Oh! thou ſtrange-inventing WALPOLE guide,
Ah! guide me thro' thy ſubterranean iſles,
Ope the trap-door where all thy powers reſide,
And mimic Fancy real woe beguiles.

The kind inventreſs dries the ſtreaming tear,
The deep-reſounding groan ſhall faintly die,
The ſigh ſhall ſicken ere it meet the air,
And Sorrow's diſmal troop affrighted fly.

Thy jawleſs ſkeleton of JOPPA's wood
Stares in my face, and frights my mental eye;
Not ſtiffen'd worſe the love-ſick FREDERIC ſtood,
When the dim ſpectre ſhriek'd the diſmal cry.

But

But whilſt the Hermit does my ſoul affright,
Love dies—Lo! in yon corner down he kneels;
I ſhudder—ſee the taper ſinks in night,
He riſes, and his fleſhleſs form reveals.

Hide me, thou parent Earth! ſee low I fall,
My ſins now meet me in the fainting hour;
Say, do thy Manes for Heaven's vengeance call,
Or can I free thee from an angry power?

Stella! if Walpole's ſpectres thus can ſcare,
Then near that great Magician's walls ne'er tread,
He'll ſurely conjure many a ſpirit there,
Till, fear-ſtruck, thou art number'd with the dead.

Oh! with this noble Sorcerer ne'er converſe,
Fly, Stella, quickly from the magic ſtorm;
Or, ſoon he'll cloſe thee in ſome high-plum'd hearſe,
Then raiſe another Angel in thy form.

Truſt not his art, for ſhould he ſtop thy breath,
And good ALPHONSO's ghoſt unbidden riſe;
He'd vaniſh, leave thee in the jaws of death,
And quite forget to cloſe thy aching eyes.

But is BIANCA ſafe in this low vale?
For ſhould his Goblins ſtretch their duſky wing,
Would they not bruiſe me for the ſaucy tale,
Would they not pinch me for the truths I ſing?

Yet whiſper not I've call'd him names, I fear
His ARIEL would my hapleſs ſprite torment,
He'd cramp my bones, and all my ſinews tear;
Should STELLA blab the ſecret I'd prevent.

But huſh, ye winds, ye crickets chirp no more,
I'll ſhrink to bed, nor theſe ſad omens hear,
An hideous ruſtling ſhakes the lattic'd door,
His ſpirits hover in the ſightleſs air.

Now,

Now, MORPHEUS, ſhut each entrance of my mind,
Sink, ſink, OTRANTO, in this vacant hour!
To thee, Oh, balmy GOD! I'm all reſign'd,
To thee e'en WALPOLE's wand reſigns its power.

TO HER GRACE

The Ducheſs Dowager of PORTLAND.

NATURE! thou active Principle, whoſe depths
The curious mind wou'd willingly explore;
Thou, who in univerſal order ſway'ſt
The jarring atoms of a various world!
The SCEPTIC's Deity! whoſe 'wilder'd ſoul
Ne'er reach'd, by Faith, thy firſt ſtupendous cauſe!
Immediate emanation of a GOD!
O, ſwell the untaught rapture; bid it riſe
Spontaneous in my bare uncultur'd mind!
Thou ſhalt aſpire, when Gratitude aſſiſts,

To

To nobler heights than Science ever dar'd.
Then ſound with ecſtaſy a PORTLAND's name,
And bid it live beyond the wreck of worlds.
For her let Fancy pierce the deep abyſs,
Dart thro' the liquid element, and tread
The ſhelly pavement, dazzling with the glare
Of varied hues; the lively coral here,
Here the pale pearl; the lovely vivid green
Of brilliant onyx, and the ſapphire's blue.

The TRITONS ſporting in their oozy grots,
Forget to heave the tempeſt-loving wave;
The huge Leviathan, which late had 'ſcap'd
Norwegian toils, and, ſtung by fear, deſcends
More ſwift than eagles mount meridian heights,
Feels rapture added to the joy of life,
Whilſt NEPTUNE, from his floating couch, thus ſpeaks:

" PORTLAND my deep dominions dares explore,

" Nor

" Nor here alone the Naturaliſt purſues
" Thoſe hidden gems by vulgar ſouls ne'er priz'd;
" For her the bold adventurer ſhall dare
" The golden ſerpent in ARABIAN wilds,
" ASPHALTITES, and the venerable NILE,
" Pluck the fair apple which GOMORRAH's flame
" Has fill'd with ſulphur; tread once hallow'd earth
" Where ancient SION ſtood; thoſe heights aſcend
" Which pious NOAH, oft DEUCALION call'd,
" Firſt hail'd with grateful joy, and fearleſs preſs
" The CASPIAN wave: for her the rover ſeeks
" The ſcatter'd remnants of a ruin'd world.
" But that the ſurge yon planet wou'd o'erwhelm,
" The roots of Ocean wou'd I throw to land,
" And all my gems ſhou'd meet her generous eye;
" ——It muſt not be; great JOVE's indignant frown
" Wou'd ſhrink each coward wave beneath his fellow.
" This boon refus'd, I gave a nobler ſtill
" In ſweet exchange; magnificently good,

" Her godlike ſoul the wanderer ſhall ſooth,
" Chace the ſad gloom from Sorrow's woe-ſunk eye,
" And bid each future minute fly in peace."

Thus ſpake the GOD, the liſt'ning ſurges catch
The potent ſounds, and waft them to the ſhore;
Echo to MANTUAN groves the ſtrain prolong'd;
But TITYRUS had long forſook the ſhade;
And, ſince his abſence, Melody has mourn'd.

On Mrs. MONTAGU.

WHY boaſt, O arrogant, imperious man,
Perfection ſo excluſive? are thy powers
Nearer approaching Deity? can'ſt thou ſolve
Queſtions which high Infinity propounds,
Soar nobler flights, or dare immortal deeds,
Unknown to woman, if ſhe greatly dares
To uſe the powers aſſign'd her? Active ſtrength,
The boaſt of animals, is clearly thine;
By this upheld, thou think'ſt the leſſon rare
That female virtues teach; and poor the height
Which female wit obtains. The theme unfolds
Its ample maze, for MONTAGU befriends
The puzzled thought, and, blazing in the eye

Of

Of boldeſt Oppoſition, ſtraït preſents
The ſoul's beſt energies, her keeneſt powers,
Clear, vigorous, enlighten'd; with firm wing
Swift ſhe o'ertakes *his* Muſe, which ſpread afar
Its brighteſt glories in the days of yore;
Lo! where ſhe, mounting, ſpurns the ſtedfaſt earth,
And, ſailing on the cloud of ſcience, bears
The banner of Perfection.———
Aſk GALLIA's mimic ſons how ſtrong her powers,
Whom, fluſh'd with plunder from her SHAKESPEARE's page,
She ſwift detects amid their dark retreats
(Horrid as CACUS in their thieviſh dens);
Regains the trophies, bears in triumph back
The pilfer'd glories to a wand'ring world.
So STELLA boaſts, from her the tale I learn'd;
With pride ſhe told it, I with rapture heard.

O, MON-

O, MONTAGU! forgive me, if I ſing
Thy wiſdom temper'd with the milder ray
Of ſoft humanity, and kindneſs bland:
So wide its influence, that the bright beams
Reach the low vale where miſts of ignorance lodge,
Strike on the innate ſpark which lay immers'd,
Thick clogg'd, and almoſt quench'd in total night—
On me it fell, and cheer'd my joyleſs heart.

Unwelcome is the firſt bright dawn of light
To the dark ſoul; impatient, ſhe rejects,
And fain wou'd puſh the heavenly ſtranger back;
She loaths the cranny which admits the day;
Confus'd, afraid of the intruding gueſt;
Diſturb'd, unwilling to receive the beam,
Which to herſelf her native darkneſs ſhews.

The effort rude to quench the cheering flame
Was mine, and e'en on STELLA cou'd I gaze

With

With ſullen envy, and admiring pride,
Till, doubly rous'd by MONTAGU, the pair
Conſpire to clear my dull, impriſon'd ſenſe,
And chaſe the miſts which dimm'd my viſual beam.

Oft as I trod my native wilds alone,
Strong guſts of thought wou'd riſe, but riſe to die;
The portals of the ſwelling ſoul ne'er op'd
By liberal converſe, rude ideas ſtrove
Awhile for vent, but found it not, and died.
Thus ruſt the Mind's beſt powers. Yon ſtarry orbs,
Majeſtic ocean, flowery vales, gay groves,
Eye-waſting lawns, and Heaven-attempting hills,
Which bound th' horizon, and which curb the view;
All thoſe, with beauteous imagery, awak'd
My raviſh'd ſoul to extacy untaught,
To all the tranſport the rapt ſenſe can bear;
But all expir'd, for want of powers to ſpeak;
All periſh'd in the mind as ſoon as born,

Eras'd more quick than cyphers on the ſhore,
O'er which the cruel waves, unheedful, roll.

Such timid rapture as young * EDWIN ſeiz'd,
When his lone footſteps on the Sage obtrude,
Whoſe noble precept charm'd his wond'ring ear,
Such rapture fill'd † LACTILLA's vacant ſoul,
When the bright Moraliſt, in ſoftneſs dreſt,
Opes all the glories of the mental world,
Deigns to direct the infant thought, to prune
The budding ſentiment, uprear the ſtalk
Of feeble fancy, bid idea live,
Woo the abſtracted ſpirit from its cares,
And gently guide her to the ſcenes of peace.
Mine was that balm, and mine the grateful heart,
Which breathes its thanks in rough, but timid ſtrains.

* See the Miniſtrel. † The Author.

CLIFTON HILL.

Written in JANUARY 1785.

IN this lone hour, when angry ſtorms deſcend,
And the chill'd ſoul deplores her diſtant friend;
When all her ſprightly fires inactive lie,
And gloomy objects fill the mental eye;
When hoary Winter ſtrides the northern blaſt,
And FLORA's beauties at his feet are caſt;
Earth by the griſly tyrant deſert made,
The feather'd warblers quit the leafleſs ſhade;
Quit thoſe dear ſcenes where life and love began,
And, cheerleſs, ſeek the ſavage haunt of man;
How mourns each tenant of the ſilent grove!
No ſoft ſenſation tunes the heart to love;

No fluttering pulſe awakes to Rapture's call;
No ſtrain reſponſive aids the water's fall.
The Swain neglects his Nymph, yet knows not why;
The Nymph, indifferent, mourns the freezing ſky;
Alike inſenſible to ſoft deſire,
She aſks no warmth—but from the kitchen fire;
Love ſeeks a milder zone; half ſunk in ſnow,
LACTILLA, ſhivering, tends her fav'rite cow;
The bleating flocks now aſk the bounteous hand,
And chryſtal ſtreams in frozen fetters ſtand.
The beauteous red-breaſt, tender in her frame,
Whoſe murder marks the fool with treble ſhame,
Near the low cottage door, in penſive mood,
Complains, and mourns her brothers of the wood.
Her ſong oft wak'd the ſoul to gentle joys,
All but his ruthleſs ſoul whoſe gun deſtroys.
For this, rough clown, long pains on thee ſhall wait,
And freezing want avenge their hapleſs fate;

For

For theſe fell murders may'ſt thou change thy kind,
In outward form as ſavage as in mind;
Go, be a bear of Pythagorean name,
From man diſtinguiſh'd by thy hideous frame.

Tho' ſlow and penſive now the moments roll,
Succeſſive months ſhall from our torpid ſoul
Hurry theſe ſcenes again; the laughing hours
Advancing ſwift, ſhall ſtrew ſpontaneous flowers;
The early-peeping ſnowdrop, crocus mild,
And modeſt violet, grace the ſecret wild;
Pale primroſe, daiſy, maypole-decking ſweet,
And purple hyacinth together meet:
All Nature's ſweets in joyous circle move,
And wake the frozen ſoul again to love.

The ruddy ſwain now ſtalks along the vale,
And ſnuffs freſh ardour from the flying gale;

The landſcape ruſhes on his untaught mind,
Strong raptures riſe, but raptures undefin'd;
He louder whiſtles, ſtretches o'er the green,
By ſcreaming milk-maids, not unheeded, ſeen;
The downcaſt look ne'er fixes on the ſwain,
They dread his eye, retire and gaze again.
'Tis mighty Love—Ye bloomings maids, beware,
Nor the lone thicket with a lover dare.
No high romantic rules of honour bind
The timid virgin of the rural kind;
No conqueſt of the paſſions e'er was taught,
No meed e'er given them for the vanquiſh'd thought.
To ſacrifice, to govern, to reſtrain,
Or to extinguiſh, or to hug the pain,
Was never theirs; inſtead, the fear of ſhame
Proves a ſtrong bulwark, and ſecures their fame;
Shielded by this, they flout, reject, deny,
With mock diſdain put the fond lover by;

Unreal

Unreal ſcorn, ſtern looks, affected pride,
Awe the poor ſwain, and ſave the trembling bride.

As o'er the upland hills I take my way,
My eyes in tranſport boundleſs ſcenes ſurvey:
Here the neat * dome where ſacred raptures riſe,
From whence the contrite groan ſhall pierce the ſkies;
Where ſin-ſtruck ſouls bend low in humble prayer,
And waſt that ſigh which ne'er is loſt in air.

Ah! ſacred turf! here a fond Parent lies,
How my ſoul melts while dreadful ſcenes ariſe!
The paſt! Ah! ſhield me, Mercy! from that thought,
My aching brain now whirls, with horror fraught.
Dead! can it be? 'twas here we frequent ſtray'd,
And theſe ſad records mournfully ſurvey'd.
I mark'd the verſe, the ſkulls her eye invite,
Whilſt my young boſom ſhudder'd with affright!

* Clifton Church. In this church-yard the Author's Mother was buried.

My heart recoil'd, and ſhun'd the loathſome view;
" Start not, my child, each human thought ſubdue,
She calmly ſaid; this fate ſhall once be thine,
My woes pronounce that it ſhall firſt be mine."
Abaſh'd, I caught the awful truths ſhe ſung,
And on her firm reſolves one moment hung;
Vain boaſt—my bulwark tumbles to the deep,
Amaz'd—alone I climb the craggy ſteep;
My ſhrieking ſoul deſerted, ſullen views
The depths below, and Hope's fond ſtrains refuſe;
I liſten'd not—She louder ſtruck the lyre,
And love divine, and moral truths conſpire.

The proud * Croeſean crew, light, cruel, vain,
Whoſe deeds have never ſwell'd the Muſes' ſtrain,
Whoſe boſoms others ſorrows ne'er aſſail,
Who hear, unheeding, Miſery's bitter tale,
Here call for ſatire, would the verſe avail.

* It is ſuppoſed this word is derived, though not very legitimately, from CROESUS.

Reſt,

Reſt, impious race!—The Muſe purſues her flight,
Breathes purer air on VINCENT's rugged height;
Here nibbling flocks of ſcanty herbage gain
A meal penurious from the barren plain;
Crop the low niggard buſh; and patient, try
The diſtant walk, and every hillock nigh:
Some baſk, ſome bound, nor terrors ever know,
Save from the human form, their only foe.
Ye bleating innocents! diſpel your fears,
My woe-ſtruck ſoul in all your troubles ſhares;
'Tis but LACTILLA—fly not from the green:
Long have I ſhar'd with you this guiltleſs ſcene.
'Tis mine to wander o'er the dewy lawn,
And mark the pallid ſtreak of early dawn;
Lo! the grey duſk that fill'd the vacant ſpace,
Now fleets, and infant light purſues the chace;
From the hill top it ſeeks the valley low;
Inflam'd, the cheeks of morn with bluſhes glow;

Behold

Behold it 'whelm'd in a bright flood of day,
It ſtrives no more, but to the God gives way.

Ye ſilent, ſolemn *, ſtrong, ſtupendous heights,
Whoſe terror-ſtriking frown the ſchool-boy frights
From the young daw; whilſt in your rugged breaſt
The chattering brood, ſecured by Horror, reſt.
Say, Muſe, what arm the low'ring brothers cleft,
And the calm ſtream in this low cradle left?
Coëval with Creation they look down,
And, ſunder'd, ſtill retain their native frown.
Beneath thoſe heights, lo! balmy ſprings † ariſe,
To which pale Beauty's faded image flies;
Their kindly powers life's genial heat reſtore,
The tardy pulſe, whoſe throbs were almoſt o'er,
Here beats a livelier tune. The breezy air,
To the wild hills invites the languid fair:

* St. VINCENT'S rocks, between which flows the River AVON.
† The Hot Wells.

Fear

Fear not the weſtern gale, thou tim'rous maid,
Nor dread its blaſt ſhall thy ſoft form invade;
Tho' cool and ſtrong the quick'ning breezes blow
And meet thy panting breath, 'twill quickly grow
More ſtrong; then drink the odoriferous draught,
With unſeen particles of health 'tis fraught.
Sit not within the threſhold of Deſpair,
Nor plead a weakneſs fatal to the fair;
Soft term for INDOLENCE, politely given,
By which we win no joy from earth or heaven.
Foul Fiend! thou bane of health, fair Virtue's bane,
Death of true pleaſure, ſource of real pain!
Keen exerciſe ſhall brace the fainting ſoul,
And bid her ſlacken'd powers more vigorous roll.

Blame not my ruſtic lay, nor think me rude,
If I avow Conceit's the grand prelude
To dire diſeaſe and death. Your high-born maid,
Whom faſhion guides, in youth's firſt bloom ſhall fade;

She ſeeks the cauſe, th' effect would fain elude,
By Death's o'erſtretching ſtride too cloſe purſu'd,
She faints within his icy graſp, yet ſtares,
And wonders why the Tyrant yet appears—
Abrupt—ſo ſoon—Thine, Faſhion, is the crime,
Fell Diſſipation does the work of time.

How thickly cloth'd, yon * rock of ſcanty ſoil,
Its lovely verdure ſcorns the hand of Toil.
Here the deep green, and here the lively plays,
The ruſſet birch, and ever-blooming bays;
The vengeful black-thorn, of wild beauties proud,
Blooms beauteous in the gloomy-chequer'd crowd:
The barren elm, the uſeful feeding oak,
Whoſe hamadryad ne'er ſhould feel the ſtroke
Of axe relentleſs, till twice fifty years
Have crown'd her woodland joys, and fruitful cares.

* Leigh Wood.

The

The pois'nous reptiles here their miſchiefs bring,
And thro' the helpleſs ſleeper dart the ſting;
The toad envenom'd, hating human eyes,
Here ſprings to light, lives long, and aged dies.
The harmleſs ſnail, ſlow-journeying, creeps away,
Sucks the young dew, but ſhuns the bolder day.
(Alas! if tranſmigration ſhould prevail,
I fear LACTILLA's ſoul muſt houſe in ſnail.)
The long-noſed mouſe, the woodland rat is here,
The ſightleſs mole, with nicely-pointed ear;
The timid rabbit hails th' impervious gloom,
Eludes the dog's keen ſcent, and ſhuns her doom.

Various the tenants of this tangled wood,
Who ſkulk all day, all night review the flood,
Chew the waſh'd weed driven by the beating wave,
Or feaſt on dreadful food, which hop'd a milder grave.
Hail, uſeful channel! Commerce ſpreads her wings,
From either pole her various treaſure brings;

Wafted

Wafted by thee, the mariner long ſtray'd,
Claſps the fond parent, and the ſighing maid;
Joy tunes the cry; the rocks rebound the roar,
The deep vibration quivers 'long the ſhore;
The merchant hears, and hails the peeping maſt,
The wave-drench'd ſailor ſcorns all peril paſt;
Now love and joy the noiſy crew invite,
And clumſy muſic crowns the rough delight.

Yours be the vulgar diſſonance, while I
Croſs the low ſtream, and ſtretch the ardent eye
O'er Nature's wilds; 'tis peace, 'tis joy ſerene,
The thought as pure as calm the vernal ſcene.
Ah, lovely meads! my boſom lighter grows,
Shakes off her huge oppreſſive weight of woes,
And ſwells in guiltleſs rapture; ever hail,
The tufted grove, and the low-winding vale!

Low

Low not, ye herds, your luſty Maſters bring
The crop of Summer; and the genial Spring
Feels for your wants, and ſoftens Winter's rage,
The hoarded hay-ſtack ſhall your woes aſſuage;
Woes ſumm'd in one alone, 'tis Nature's call,
That ſecret voice which fills creation all.

Beneath this ſtack * Louisa's dwelling roſe,
Here the fair Maniac bore three Winters ſnows.
Here long ſhe ſhiver'd, ſtiffening in the blaſt,
The lightnings round their livid horrors caſt;
The thunders roar, while ruſhing torrents pour,
And add new woes to bleak affliction's hour;
The heavens lour diſmal while the ſtorm deſcends,
No Mother's boſom the ſoft maid befriends;

* The beautiful unfortunate Louisa, fugitive Foreigner, lived three years in a ſtate of diſtraction under this hay-ſtack, without going into a houſe. She once confeſſed, in a lucid interval, that ſhe had eſcaped from a Convent, in which ſhe had been confined by her father, on refuſing a marriage of his propoſing, her affections being engaged to another man.

But,

But, frighten'd, o'er the wilds ſhe ſwiftly flies,
And drench'd with rains, the roofleſs hay-ſtack tries.
The morn was fair, and gentle —— ſought
Theſe lonely woodlands, friends to ſober Thought;
With Solitude, the ſlow-pac'd maid is ſeen
Tread the dark grove, and unfrequented green,
Well —— knew their lurkings; PHOEBUS ſhone,
While, muſing, ſhe purſued the track alone.
O, thou kind friend! whom here I dare not name,
Who to LOUISA's ſhed of miſery came,
Lur'd by the tale, ſigh'd o'er her beauteous form,
And gently drew her from the beating ſtorm,
Stand forth—defend, for well thou canſt, the cauſe
Of Heaven, and juſtify its rigid laws;
Yet own that human laws are harſhly given,
When they extend beyond the will of Heaven.
Say, can thy pen for that hard duty plead,
By which the meek and helpleſs maid's decreed

To

To dire ſecluſion? Snatch'd from guiltleſs joys,
To where corroding grief the frame deſtroys;
Monaſtic glooms, which active virtue cramp,
Where horrid ſilence chills the vital lamp;
Slowly and faint the languid pulſes beat,
And the chill'd heart forgets its genial heat;
The dim ſunk eye, with hopeleſs glance, explores
The ſolemn aiſles, and death-denouncing doors,
Ne'er to be paſt again.—Now heaves the ſigh,
Now unavailing ſorrows fill the eye:
Fancy once more brings back the long-loſt youth
To the fond ſoul, in all the charms of Truth;
She welcomes the lov'd image; buſy Thought
Pourtrays the paſt, with guiltleſs pleaſures fraught;
'Tis momentary bliſs, 'tis rapture high,
The heart o'erflows, and all is extacy.
Memory! I charge thee yet preſerve the ſhade,
Ah! let not yet the glittering colours fade!

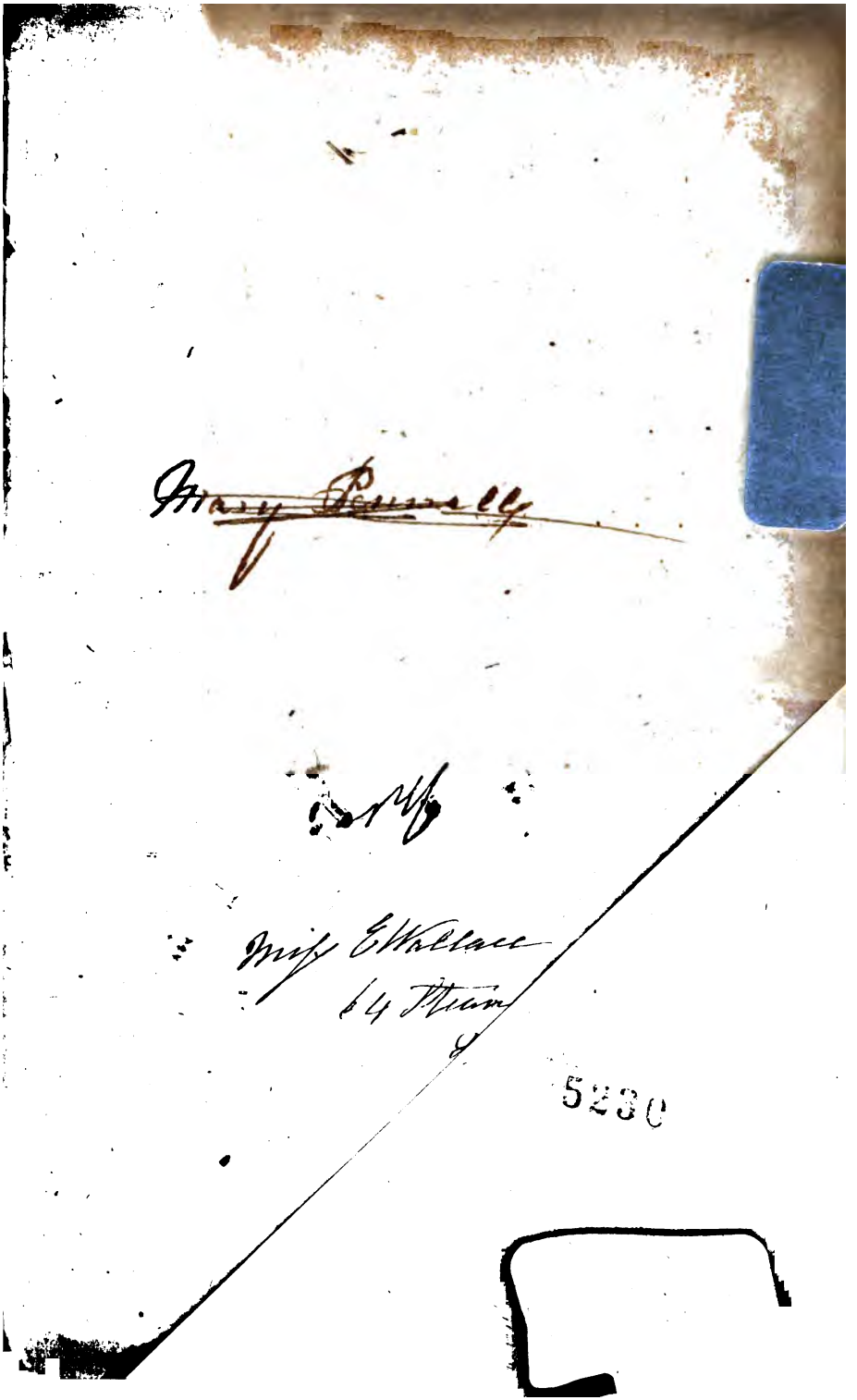
Forbear the cruel future yet to view,
When the ſad ſoul muſt bid a long adieu,
E'en to its fancied bliſs—Ah! turn not yet
Thou wretched bankrupt, that muſt ſoon forget
This farewel draught of joy: lo! Fancy dies,
E'en the thin phantom of paſt pleaſure flies.
Thought ſinks in real woe; too poor to give
Her preſent bliſs, ſhe bids the future live;
The ſpirit ſoon quits that fond claſp, for ſee,
The future offers finiſh'd miſery.
Hope quite extinct, lo! frantic thro' the aiſles
She raves, while SUPERSTITION grimly ſmiles.
Th' exhauſted mourner mopes, then wildly ſtalks
Round the drear dome, and ſeeks the darkeſt walks.
The glance diſtracted each ſad ſiſter meets,
The ſorrow-ſpeaking eye in ſilence greets
Each death-devoted maid; LOUISA here
Runs thro' each various ſhape of ſad deſpair;

Now

Now ſwells with guſts of hope, now ſick'ning dies;
Alternate thoughts of death and life ariſe
Within her panting ſoul; the firm reſolve,
The new deſire, in ſtronger fears diſſolve.
She ſtarts—then ſeiz'd the moment of her fate,
Quits the lone cloyſter and the horrid grate,
Whilſt wilder horrors to receive her wait;
Muffled, on Freedom's happy plains they ſtand;
And eager ſeize her not reluctant hand;
Too late to theſe mild ſhores the mourner came,
For now the guilt of flight o'erwhelms her frame:
Her broken vows in wild diſorder roll,
And ſtick like ſerpents in her trembling ſoul;
THOUGHT, what art thou? of thee ſhe boaſts no more,
O'erwhelm'd, thou dy'ſt amid the wilder roar
Of lawleſs anarchy, which ſweeps the ſoul,
Whilſt her drown'd faculties like pebbles roll,
Unloos'd, uptorn, by whirlwinds of deſpair,
Each well-taught moral now diſſolves in air;

Diſhevel'd, lo! her beauteous treſſes fly,
And the wild glance now fills the ſtarting eye;
The balls, fierce glaring in their orbits move,
Bright ſpheres, where beam'd the ſparkling fires of Love,
Now roam for objects which once fill'd her mind,
Ah! long-loſt objects they muſt never find.
Ill ſtarr'd Louisa! Memory, 'tis a ſtrain,
Which fills my ſoul with ſympathetic pain.
Remembrance, hence, give thy vain ſtruggles o'er,
Nor ſwell the line with forms that live no more.

THE END.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